

For Immediate Release

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*Washington, D.C.*-- Today, Congressman Albio Sires reintroduced the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act. This legislation creates grant programs to revitalize parks that must be matched with local funds. During the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, a bipartisan group of 132 Representatives co-sponsored the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act and over 30 organizations endorsed the legislation.

“In my district, parks serve as the backyard of the community and we see people of all backgrounds congregating in parks large and small,” said Congressman Sires. “This legislation will help communities create new and rehabilitate existing parks and recreation spaces to provide spaces for people of all ages to gather.”

This legislation will provide four different types of federal grants and technical assistance which must be matched with local funds. Rehabilitation grants would rebuild and expand new and existing recreation and facilities, while innovation grants would address equipment and supply needs for urban parks and recreation facilities. At-risk youth recreation grants provide funds for programs that have shown success in providing alternative activities to children at risk of

engaging in criminal behavior. Lastly, recovery action program grants will promote development of local park and recreation recovery action programs by involving the community and youth to develop priorities and goals.

During a time when many Americans are affected by deteriorating community facilities, health problems, juvenile delinquency, and limited green spaces, healthy and vibrant urban areas can play important roles. Parks create opportunities for people to become more physically active and can also act to provide alternative activities for youth. Research shows that urban parks raise property values, attract businesses and spur critical economic activity.

“This legislation will create jobs, fight obesity, reduce crime, and strengthen neighborhoods by investing in urban parks and community centers,” said Sires. “I have always been a strong advocate for parks and believe that urban parks and recreation centers are instrumental in helping our nation achieve important national goals of increasing exercise, improving health, and revitalizing our economy.”

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